

The Library Assistant:

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ANNOUNCEMENTS.

INAUGURAL MEETING.

The first meeting of the Twelfth Session will be held at the **London School of Economics, Clare Market, Kingsway, W.C.**, on **Wednesday, October 10th**, when the inaugural address will be delivered by **EDMUND GOSSE, ESQ., LL.D.**, Librarian of the House of Lords. The chair will be taken at 8.0 p.m. by **E. Wyndham Hulme, Esq.**

It should not be necessary for us to emphasise the special importance of this meeting. The names of Dr. Gosse as Lecturer, and Mr. Wyndham Hulme as Chairman, are sufficient to guarantee that the proceedings will be both interesting and profitable. The Association is exceedingly fortunate in having obtained for its inaugural meeting the promise of an address from so eminent a scholar and man of letters as Dr. Gosse, and members should show their appreciation of his kindness by attending in large numbers. Moreover, this is the first meeting of a new Session—a Session which promises to be as great a success as the last, and the Committee is extremely anxious to make a good start. The meeting is open to all assistants, and if each member will make a point of being present himself, and will endeavour to introduce a non-member, not only will the success of the evening be assured, but the Association may hope to recruit many new members. We sincerely hope that the attendance will be worthy of the occasion.

NINTH ANNUAL DINNER.

We have pleasure in announcing that the ninth Annual Dinner will be held at **Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, E.C.**, on **November 7th**, at **7.30 p.m.** Members and their friends, including ladies, are cordially invited to be present. Tickets, price **3s. 6d.** each, may be had from the **Hon. Sec. of the Finance and General Purposes Sub-Committee—Mr. W. Geo. Chambers, Public Library, Plumstead.** It is requested that those intending to be present will make early application for tickets in order that adequate arrangements may be made for their comfort. The attendance at the last dinner established a record which we hope to beat this year, and we look forward with confidence to the assistance of our many friends to bring about this desirable result. Morning dress will be worn. A full musical programme is in course of preparation.

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' ASSOCIATION: A STATEMENT OF ITS USE AND OBJECTS.*

By GEO. E. ROEBUCK.

There can be no doubt that the processes of growth and principles of progress of any institution which claims to be necessary should be as clearly understood as possible—half the difficulties that are met by organisations arise from a lack of understanding on these points by influential outsiders, and our Association has not been distinct from others in this respect. We are on the eve of a new Session, a Session which has every prospect of an advanced usefulness, and therefore we will endeavour to smooth the path for this term by clearing up some misunderstandings, and by throwing stronger light upon some matters of importance. We will attempt to reveal the L.A.A. as we see it, to explain what we know to be it, what we imagine it has done, and what we hope it may do. If we can make this clear our future course will be the easier.

We consider the L.A.A. to be a body organised for the social betterment and educational improvement of library workers other than chief librarians. We are united in our agreement that library assistantship in this country is capable of much advancement and we set ourselves to the task of working up to a better standard amongst ourselves. We desire to learn from one another rather than to teach. We take a modest opinion of our capabilities, and are constantly urging each other on, meanwhile exhibiting an unselfish desire to extend the beneficial influence we know to exist, to all workers in the same field as ourselves. Our difficulties are great from the fact that outside the large towns the men we would reach are isolated units, hard to get at and harder to quicken to that pitch when a man admits his weaknesses and girds himself for a climb to higher altitudes. We desire to work up a chain of connection and intercourse which shall extend to every library assistant in the United Kingdom, and even to the men in that Britain which lies overseas. Along that chain we hope to send the constant stimulus to educational and practical improvement, which can only result in a school of librarianship such as Edwards and Bradshaw foresaw. This object of ours is one to which only the meanest souls can take exception, and one which has the double effect to every man who throws in his lot with us, inasmuch as whilst it helps him to help himself it is slowly, but most surely, building up a profession which through the present condition of things is not sufficiently accredited. To advance the professional status is to advance the scope and opportunities of every young man who is to be at the helm of affairs in the future, and that is an undeniable argument which should accord the L.A.A. full measure of justification. By slow degrees we have grown until to-day we represent approximately some 40 per cent. of the junior circle. We are unique in our standing, and since our membership is culled from all quarters of our Empire we may be pardoned if we consider ourselves to be in a position to voice the opinions and watch the interests of the circle of assistantship as a whole. It is to our efforts in this direction that unenrolled men are prone to take umbrage, yet if those men only realised the earnest regard for their interests which the L.A.A. evinces, whether members or not, the troublesome obstructions we meet would not be so readily forthcoming. We are an active body, and did we choose we could close our lists and work hard amongst ourselves to produce a school of men who, by their greater opportunities, would become preference men in a few years. In so doing we should menace the outer ring very seriously, but we prefer to extend to others the privileges we have won for ourselves.

*An abridgement of an address delivered at the Eleventh Annual Meeting, June, 1906.

As a body we claim the interested services of the greatest men in the kingdom, and in our own more limited circle it would be difficult to name a librarian of prominence who has not at some time or other assisted us. From the officer of His Majesty the King downwards we find on every hand enthusiastic support and pressure to go ahead, and we were a sorry band did we refuse to take in hand that work which the men who know assure us we are fitted, aye, expected to perform. In our official journal we can safely claim a marked degree of influence. It is true that the way we run this sturdy little periodical does not find favour in the eyes of all, but when the bibliography of library economy is produced in the future the profession generally will awaken to the fact that "The Library Assistant" has been one of the most active channels for the spread of that literature which makes for better workers and a better cause. There is also much good work done by our members outside the limits of Association work; work which only requires a little time to proclaim its usefulness. Through the media of our Study Circles, Evercirculators, etc., we are helping men in the outlying positions in the same way as we help ourselves—by bringing to their notice a variety of opinions upon those matters which it has pleased them to take in hand. Perhaps, however, our greatest service has been through the means of our private correspondence; many a librarian in this country has availed himself of this agency for expressing a difficulty and finding a remedy.

But why, in face of these services and opportunities, do we not represent a larger percentage of the possible membership? In the first place many assistants are still unaware of the existence of the L.A.A. Then there are the men who attach themselves to the Library Association, perhaps likewise unaware, or in doubt, as to the position we occupy. Some, of course, aspire to be associated with the "upper ten" straight away; we would remind such that there is better work and much more need for it amongst the class to which, after all, they belong. A further cause is met with in the neighbourhood of large towns, where the library workers have formed or are forming local guilds to the benefit of themselves alone. Such local enterprise is praiseworthy in a way, but it tends to create a vast duplication of energy which, if properly marshalled, would go a great deal further and benefit the calling to a greater extent. A third reason is that some men find even our modest subscription too much when added to a host of other expenses which have to be met with a limited wage. These cases are not many, but they do occur. The main reason rests to be considered. It can be divided into two groups—the men sometimes fear a sort of trades-unionism, something that is going to prejudice them in the eyes of their chiefs; or else they consider their money thrown away on a society which does not pledge itself to advocate less hours and more pay. Where the first cause obtains we have a duty before us. Such men must be convinced of the clean and useful work we are doing, and hope, with their co-operation, to do. Men of the last class we can do without—they can be of no service to us or to the calling which is weakened by embracing them. Lest we be misunderstood whilst we labour to clear misunderstandings, let it be noticed that the L.A.A. does not in any way discount the unenrolled men, nor does the L.A.A. claim to be a kind of chosen flock. They are simply individuals who comprise an organisation which will ultimately benefit its members. They are shareholders, so to speak, in a co-operative venture from which no one benefits more than another, unless it be that some members take small interest in the common affairs whilst others make up with an abundance. Logically, the more interest one takes in one's Association, the more one gets out of it.

Of our past record we need not say a great deal. We were instituted at the period when the movement for a better class of library workers began to take shape. Fifteen years ago assistantship was not as we find it to-day; generally speaking, the men were not to be compared with the

class that is backing the library movement to-day. In many cases the work was not carried out with aim, it was an easy livelihood, and as such had its attractions. The men were but poorly paid, but perhaps they were paid as much as they were worth. They knew few if any of their craft; they seldom aspired to promotion outside their own library. They had no system of practical instruction, and few technical manuals were in existence, such as were being often unknown. We must not forget, however, that librarianship was at this date still in the making. Lucky was the assistant who was being coached for future service prior to 1892. The Library Association having ironed out those broad lines of policy and practice which are the feeding stuffs of the assistant of to-day, turned to the pressing need for a better type of assistant. An examination scheme was formulated, and though it cannot be recorded that this scheme was successful, it must be admitted that it served a good end, if only by reason of the information it yielded as to the condition of the men behind the counter. Besides this it brought the urgency of qualification home to the assistants; there was an awakening to the fact that librarianship meant a life spent in the acquisition of knowledge, and in that awakening the beginnings of real assistantship are to be noted. Almost at once the L.A.A. was founded. Its initiators were men in advanced posts in Metropolitan libraries, who realised the condition of things and determined to work up some means of co-operation amongst library workers for mutual assistance. Their efforts have brought forth good fruit; the L.A.A. has been largely instrumental in bringing about that increased efficiency amongst assistants which is so noticeable nowadays.

Parallel with the growth of the L.A.A. practical instruction emerged from the ashes of former attempts, and our body played a part in the closing of the entry to untrained men. We protested against the "open door" in justice to those men whom we were urging to qualify. We knew that if the Library Association only gave us time we could send them more candidates than they bargained for, but until we saw that it was to be an examination of a technical character reserved for practical men we could scarcely be blamed for holding our hands. A temporary breach resulted, but, as the years have rolled by, relations have become closer until last year, when they reached high water mark in the invitation to affiliate with which the Library Association honoured us. This invitation was declined because the independence of the L.A.A. was considered essential to its progress and the work it had in view. So we find ourselves to-day. No less than 500 men have passed or are passing through our Association to competency, and this linking up of library workers is to show results before long—even now the working out can be traced.

On the eve of a new Session we wonder what is in store for us? Is this year to outstrip all forerunners, or is that dry rot apathy to creep in and frustrate our enterprise just as we near the pinnacle? It is no idle speculation. Whilst a body is forming, whilst it yet remains in the first stages, there is much hope and scope for personal initiative. All eyes are fixed on that future for which all heads and hands are so hard at work, but as we become more and more established there is a tendency for enthusiasm to flag. Lest this fault shall become too pronounced, let us make an appeal for close interest and continued energy before we speak of work ahead. There will always be a something to strive for, a something to keep our association up to concert pitch. Every generation of assistants will find as much awaiting them as we are faced with to-day; the greater improvement in the standard of assistantship will only mean a greater need for the L.A.A. We cannot afford to slacken speed; before us lies a great work of which as yet we know but the beginnings.

The campaign for extended membership must go on without ceasing, and upon the results of this campaign depends the amount of work we shall be able to perform. Our journal is a good lever in this respect, but

to increase the usefulness of that production is impossible so long as we are unable to increase its bulk. This means more expenditure, which reads new members. In receiving new members we are reaching a farther field, we are pulling down that approximated 60 per cent. that stands at present as a check to unanimity of object amongst younger British librarians, and we are becoming more in order to speak and act for the whole. If members in the provincial districts would only work up local sections they would be most heartily backed by the main body. These local sections are the future aim of the L.A.A., and until they are formed no true progress outside the larger towns is possible. The existence of present local organisations need be no obstacle—get them amalgamated, linked up in any way which has a trace of promise in it, and extend the benefits we enjoy. So long as a stray provincial assistant is stranded, so long can it be said that the L.A.A. is not doing its work.

The aim of all this enrolment now calls for examination. As has been stated our first care must be for certificated qualification. No society of a practical nature can afford for its members to ignore a standard of proficiency. In order to be of service to our class we have two duties to perform in this connection, viz., to watch the attitude of the Library Association Education Committee, frankly criticising its propaganda, and at the same time to assist ourselves and our fellows to obtain that certification which the Education Committee is instituted to issue. There can be no two minds as to the result, which will be to clear the difficulties for both examiners and examinees. What is more, we are justified in interesting ourselves in those matters which stand between us and the fields of competency. A further aim rests with the last mentioned. We know as well as our chiefs the second rate position in which librarianship is recognised to-day, and we believe that to raise this can only be accomplished by raising the standard of the men at the wheel. Let there be no mistaken ideas—we are not yet of a stuff that 20th century librarianship demands. It would, however, be foolish to imagine that assistants are yet prepared to back our Association for no more material results; the accomplishment of these objects shows little to the eye, and does not go far to stimulate active interest. The intercommunication must be continuous. More measures need introducing to keep apathy under whilst our elected leaders are moving slowly along the track. Apathy is the great enemy—it arises mainly from a feeling that the general membership has no finger in the administrative pie. There must be more work for these fingers. The greater the membership, the wider the membership, the more need for help, therefore, members who may feel this canker at work in themselves have a remedy waiting at hand. The Executive can make work and can undertake many an enterprise, but no Executive in this world can bring back interest once a member chooses to let it go by the board.

Our Association has now reached a level of recognition at home and abroad; it has a clearer course than ever, and its doings can be looked forward to with interest. It has come to stay, and has much to do. Its success depends not only on a carefully selected Executive, but also on the efforts of every individual member. Measures are occupying the attention of the several Committees which will mean much to the dignity of the calling, the pleasure of the membership, and the progress of the L.A.A. Our social arrangements in the past years have been very happy ones, and we are more encouraged to go ahead in this direction. Our intercourse is extending month by month—overseas as well as in the United Kingdom—and the day seems nearer when we shall have a representative union in each of the colonies of the realm. We have everything to gain by a long prosperity; we and all our class have everything to lose without the L.A.A. Let us work hard, therefore, but above all let us work earnestly.

LIBRARY ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE.

The twenty-ninth Annual Meeting of the Library Association was held at Bradford on September 4th, 5th and 6th. This was the first time that the Association had met at Bradford, and the meeting was in every way a success.

On Monday evening, on the invitation of the Mayor and Mayoress, a large number of members attended a reception at the Cartwright Memorial Hall. The real business of the Conference commenced on Tuesday, September 4th, the address of the President (Sir William H. Bailey) being the chief item of interest at the morning session. At the outset he made a reference to the death since the last annual meeting of Dr. Richard Garnett. He went on to review the state of affairs when the late Queen ascended the throne, and traced the growth of knowledge and the advancement of science during the last century, with which had come the agitation for free libraries. "Appreciating the mighty achievements of science, the increase of material wealth and comfort, and the higher recognition of human brotherhood, I venture to ask you," said Sir William, "to agree with me that the Free Libraries Act was the inarticulate expression of these red-letter days, and one of the greatest triumphs of the great age of Queen Victoria." The Acts had now been adopted in 203 cities and boroughs of this country, which controlled about 600 libraries. In the free libraries of the kingdom there were 5,809,196 books, and he estimated that nearly 50,000,000 readers used these libraries last year. Could anyone doubt the refining influence of this literature on its readers? Referring to the question of novel-reading, Sir William said it was frequently asked, "Why should public money be spent for novel-readers?" This alarming query he answered by saying that the free library was for innocent recreation as well as for instruction. The novel was a silent, peaceful, restful recreation, and one of the best methods of triumphing over the misfortunes of life. It was a comfort to the afflicted and a solace to those in despair. The reading of it was the gentlest of all the arts. A novel was to the individual what the theatre was to the public, with this great advantage to the individual, that he could choose his location and his plot, he could sit in a room or garden or in bed, and could witness the play and be an audience of one. A novel-reader could indulge in intelligent diversion, or he might repair a neglected youth or add to the stores of a polite education.

Sir William, speaking of the partnership of the library with industry, said the most direct instance of this could, he thought, be found in Paris. In the year 1892, when that association visited Paris, the members inspected the Forney Libraries of Industrial Art, which were established in the working-class districts of the city. They were under municipal control, and were especially founded to foster industrial art. When all were erected there would be one in each of the 100 wards of the city. Books, patterns, prints, drawings, and photographs were lent to workmen. The especial interest and aim of the administration was to keep on the shelves of the library all material of interest to the particular trade of the district. Not only did house decorators find designs and books relating to their work, but fan painters, porcelain modellers, designers of iron and bronze gates, mediæval metal workers, cabinetmakers, builders, workers of constructive as well as decorative arts found inspiration from the wealth of examples on the shelves and walls—for the grammar of ornament could only be taught by examples. These libraries might be imitated with profit in this country.

The remainder of the morning was devoted to the reading and discussion of some papers dealing with the local libraries and to a paper on "Village libraries, with special reference to Yorkshire," by Mr. Joseph Daykin, Organising Secretary, Yorkshire Union of Institutes and Yorkshire Village Libraries. Mr. Daykin's paper was a plea for libraries in

country places, and explained what had been done by the Union of Institutes and Yorkshire Village Libraries. In the discussion which followed the need of propaganda was emphasised, and the following resolution was carried: "That the Council of the Library Association be requested to consider as to the compilation and publication of propagandist literature, and the preparation of a lantern lecture for use as may be required."

On the resumption of the conference after luncheon, an hour and a-half was devoted to "the leather question."

Dr. J. Gordon Parker (Herold's Institute, Bermondsey) gave an address on leathers, in which with blackboard illustrations he demonstrated the microscopical construction of leather, and showed the cause of the fact that leathers pared down to make them thinner and more convenient for bookbinding lost a great proportion of their strength. He also condemned the process of "plating" leathers—which process consisted in pressing them between rollers or plates to give them a grain. Discussing the different leathers for binding, he spoke of pig skin as exceedingly durable, but it was suitable only for very large books. When used for small it was necessary that it should be reduced in thickness, and this process of reduction destroyed the durability of the skin. Persian leather he approved for binding of books which were—like the novels of a lending library—to undergo hard wear, but of which the binding was not expected to last more than six or seven to ten years. But the Persian leather must not have been bleached with mineral acids in the process of re-dressing.

In the course of the discussion the practice of cutting down the bindings contract to the lowest possible tender was condemned, and it was admitted by Dr. Parker, in reply to questions, that it was absolutely impossible to identify with certainty in many cases in what leather a book was bound, except by the process of stripping the book, soaking the leather, and subjecting it to microscopical examination.

Next was read a very thoughtful paper on "The relation of Public Libraries to the present system of Education," by Mr. R. Roberts, Chairman of the Bradford Education Committee. Dealing with the relation of the public library, art gallery, and museum to the national system of education, Mr. Roberts said it was evident from the wording of the Libraries Act that such institutions were intended to become centres of instruction and enlightenment, not mere collections of books and pictures. Lecture rooms for popular exposition, and students' rooms for quiet study and literary research work, should be regarded as indispensable parts of the public library equipment. Library committees ought to have the powers to organise courses of lectures with competent paid lecturers. Mr. Roberts further advocated the interchange of the great art treasures. A work of real art was a gift of genius to the race, and to imprison it within the walls of a gallery to that extent limited the range of its benediction of beauty. Could not these noble creations be regarded as held in trust for the nation by the great corporations possessing them, and such arrangements made by them for their mutual interchange as would send them through the country on a new "pilgrimage of grace?" The vast accumulations of literature of every kind continually going on in the Bodleian Library and the British Museum might also be utilised. A copy of every printed thing in England had to be sent to these institutions, and avalanches of books, pamphlets, and tracts descended daily upon them. The authorities of the Bodleian had to hire warehouse room in the country places round Oxford, and cartloads of literature were sent to these places to be stocked. No human eye ever saw them again. This was an awful waste. These vast accumulations of literature might be utilised for the advantage of the nation. Surely some means of distributing them on loan throughout the whole country might be devised.

On Wednesday morning the subject of "Library Legislation for Country Areas" was the first topic for discussion, Mr. H. W. Fovargue,

the Hon. Solicitor to the Association, contributing a paper on the subject. This was followed by a paper on 'The present position of London Municipal Libraries, with suggestions for increasing their efficiency,' by Mr. John McKillop, Secretary and Librarian, London School of Economics. In the course of his paper Mr. McKillop drew attention to the present irregularities in the distribution of libraries in London. He also pointed out the difficulty which existed in providing reference libraries sufficiently strong to be of real use to the student, and suggested that instead of endeavouring to build up reference departments in connection with each of these numerous small libraries a central storehouse of books of the more costly type should be formed by the London County Council, which books should be available for loan to the various municipal libraries for the use of their readers.

At Thursday morning's session Mr. E. A. Savage (Wallasey) introduced the subject of Classification in a paper which gave an account of recent developments, and discussed the future of the subject.

Mr. Cyril Davenport, V.D., F.S.A., of the British Museum, delivered a lantern lecture upon the history of bookbinding in England. With the aid of a fine series of lantern pictures of famous specimens of binding, the lecturer showed and described specimens of the characteristic work of the great bookbinders of the past. Speaking generally, he said that English bookbinders were undoubtedly supreme among the bookbinders of the world in dealing with large books, but for smaller work than folio size the French work was finer. Sketching, with many interesting notes, the development of bookbinding as an art from the ninth century, Mr. Davenport brought his subject down to the most modern times. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, he said, came T. J. Cobden Sanderson, a man of education and culture, and he had proved to be the greatest English binder of the nineteenth century. A pupil of Mr. Roger T. Coverley, he had evolved a style entirely original, and he often managed to introduce some small manner or device on his binding that had some accord with the subject matter of the book. This was not new, as it had been done long ago by Berthelet. Mr. Cobden Sanderson had started a new school of binding design, and already several of his followers—close or distant—had succeeded in making their work also famous. Among these were Mr. Douglas Cockerell, Mr. de Santy, Mr. Saugorski, and Mr. Sutcliffe. Miss Sarah Prideaux had done most admirable and original work, and so had Miss McColl. These two ladies had strongly influenced American ladies to take to bookbinding as a profession. Miss Birkenrath set small jewels in her bindings with rich effect, and Miss Adams had of late years produced some excellent and original designs. There was much hope for the future of art bookbinding in England.

From the point of view of the assistant Thursday afternoon's session was by far the most important of the Conference. The subject for discussion was the Education of the Librarian, Mr. H. D. Roberts dealing with the question in its elementary stage, and Mr. E. A. Baker, M.A., with the advanced stage. Mr. Roberts said that the necessity for a better educated library staff was becoming more and more apparent. He thought it should be a fundamental principle that no one should be allowed to join a library staff unless he could produce evidence of a good general education, and that no promotion should be made until the assistant gradually passed all the examinations of the Association. He knew it was difficult to get the proper type of assistants for the small wages usually offered, but did not think the obstacles were insuperable. Many libraries were moving in this direction, and there was a growing tendency on the part of assistants to present themselves for the official examinations. After tracing the history of the work of the Association in connection with the technical education of assistants, Mr. Roberts said that the present examination syllabus has been in existence for three years, and he thought it should be given a longer trial before any great changes were made in

it. There was no doubt that the technical classes of the London School of Economics, and the correspondence classes of the Library Association had done much to educate a class of assistants who were gradually becoming certificated. It might be found desirable later to institute an advanced examination, so that the present syllabus might be said to be the elementary stage.

Mr. Baker, in his paper, said that the previous interesting paper had described the existing system of education and its history, and although much that he might have to say might sound like criticism, that was not his intention. In drawing up plans for the future one could not help pointing out the deficiencies of the present, but far from saying anything derogatory of the system now in force, he believed it to be the most practical solution of the problem so far produced. After discussing the objects of professional education, he suggested the need of a modification of the present scheme by introducing an easier course for beginners, and a more progressive one for advanced students, although he did not think his proposals would be carried into effect just yet. Mr. Baker's suggestions for a graduated syllabus included a milder edition of the present scheme; a more severe test on practically the same subjects, with certain modifications to correct the preponderance of the technical side, at present in the ratio of five to one, this to form the test for registration, whenever that is adopted; final work for the diploma, which should be a mark of distinction corresponding to a degree. Candidates should be required to take one of four groups of subjects; modern literature; ancient literature; science; or history and sociology—each group to embrace the history, bibliography, and library science attaching thereto.

The discussion was contributed to by a paper from Mr. W. C. Berwick Sayers, which was read in his absence. He thought the evolution of the examinations scheme should be gradual and not volcanic. The initial mistake in connection with library staffs was that there was no apprenticeship, but he thought it might be an advantage if assistants were obliged to serve two years without any salary in exchange for practical training; it would keep out the lad who only came for a short time, waiting for some other opening to turn up. He advocated strongly the necessity for preliminary examinations, and thought the hours of assistants should be shortened in order to allow them more time for study.

This session brought to an end the business part of the proceedings. The social side of the Conference had not been overlooked, and Bradford rose nobly to the occasion in entertaining her guests. The Annual Dinner of the Association was held on the Thursday night at the Midland Hotel, Bradford, Sir William H. Bailey presiding.

Next year's Conference is to be held at Glasgow.

THE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Committee was held at Bromley Public Library, Poplar, on Wednesday evening, September 12th. Mr. W. Benson Thorne presided, and there were also present Messrs. Bullen, Chambers, Coutts, Peplow, Poulter, Rees, Roebuck, Smith, Stephen, and the Junior members: Messrs. Bayley, Bell, and Cornwall. A letter from Mr. W. C. Berwick Sayers (Hon. Sec.) was read in which he apologised for absence. The particulars of the scheme for the official register of library assistants were laid before the Committee, and the question of the Committee's official sanction was deferred until the next meeting. An elaborate design for the cover of "The Library Assistant" was received from Mr. McCall, and a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to him. The book chosen by the Chairman and Treasurer for the Library at Steeple Claydon was Sharp's "Dictionary of Authors." The Treasurer read a letter from Miss J. A. Becke, the Hon. Librarian of Steeple Claydon Library, acknowledging the gift and thanking the L.A.A. for it. After some

discussion on the formation of a Welcome Committee it was decided that this work should be carried out by all the members of the General Committee.

Five new members were elected, and other routine business transacted. The next meeting will be held on October 24th.

NEW BOOK.

Manual of Practical Bibliography. By James Duff Brown. London: G. Routledge and Sons, Ltd. Fcap. 8vo. 175 pp. Price, 2s. 6d.

This unpretentious but really useful little volume will place students of bibliography under a debt of gratitude to Mr. Brown. The need of such a book has long been felt, and by none more keenly than by library assistants. Mr. Brown, coming into contact with assistants as he has, has no doubt recognised this, and has supplied the want. The book is just what it claims to be—a manual of elementary practical bibliography, and the author explains in his preface that he has made no pretence to satisfy the needs of the book-hunter or the person interested in historical typography or ancient manuscripts. The arrangement of the chapters follows pretty closely the arrangement of the various sections in the Library Association's examination syllabus in practical bibliography, and this will enhance the value of the book to library assistants. Title-pages and colophons, printers' marks; place of publication, dates and chronograms; pagination, signatures, sizes, collation; compilation of bibliographies and catalogues; annotations, rules and examples for book description and for the compilation of bibliographies; guides and aids to books and their description; and collection of books are some of the chapter headings. There are also two useful appendices: (1) Glossary of the chief bibliographical and cataloguing terms used in the English language, and (2) Latin and vernacular names of chief centres of printing. Those who have had any experience in "coaching" members of staffs for the examinations in the subject will appreciate the author's prefatory remark that "on the practical side of elementary bibliography the information is scattered about among all kinds of other books on various aspects of bibliography, cataloguing and librarianship." This can no longer be said; the chief points connected with book description have now been brought together. We have emphasised the special value of the book to library assistants because none can doubt that Mr. Brown had them closely in mind when he contemplated the book, and we hope that among assistants it will have a large circulation.

LIBRARY PUBLICATIONS.

Stepney Public Libraries. Catalogue of Books in the Children's Department, St. George's Library. Cr. 8vo. 45 pp. 1d.

We acknowledged the receipt of this catalogue last month, but have found so much to interest us in it that we desire to notice it further in order to commend it favourably to assistants who are interested in the treatment of juvenile literature. It is an attempt to bring into close relation the subject matter of works of fiction. The first part of the catalogue is an alphabetic-subject list of fiction and non-fiction arranged in such an order that the youngster who follows it out gains a more or less thorough knowledge of the subject, a constant temptation being thrown in his way to read more serious works than stories. The second part is an author-title list. While the catalogue is very brief, being of the title-a-line form, it is yet interestingly annotated. Books suitable for girls are indicated by a star in the author part; and brief annotations in square brackets indicate the nature of books in the subject part. We think it would have been an improvement if the star had been used in the alphabetic-subject part as well. We extract a few entries to show the method of annotation:—

France. A.L.O.E. Lady of Provence. [Revolution, 1792, tale.]
 Calcott. Little Arthur's history of France.
 Christmas in many lands [customs].
 Doyle. White Company. [15th century, tale.]

Our only remark on this is that if a chronological order had been adopted under countries, and a logical—i.e., order of difficulty—under subjects this would have been greatly improved. The excellent example of England and the Empire, with its chronological arrangement of all the available material, pp. 9-12, is an earnest of what might be done in this direction. The alphabetical order of subjects—i.e., Afghanistan, Africa, Alaska, Alexandria, Alfred, etc., has the disadvantage of splitting cognate subjects into a dozen places and making numberless references necessary; but on the other hand it has the priceless cataloguing virtue, simplicity. The preface is simple, brief, and to the point; the adapted rules—although there are rather too many we think—are good and also simple; and we have been delighted with the awe-inspiring injunction, READ THE PREFACE, printed in such heavy block letters on the cover, that it would haunt anyone who dared to consult the catalogue without first obeying. As far as we have tested it the catalogue is excellent. We should have liked to find "Ivanhoe" under Tournaments, but we must not expect to find a juvenile catalogue such as that of the Pittsburgh libraries in a penny cover. As it is this is the best penny juvenile catalogue we remember to have seen.

U 832.

We have also received the monthly bulletin of the Nottingham Public Libraries, and the annual report of Baillie's Institution, Glasgow.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of "The Library Assistant."

Correspondence Class on Classification.

Sir,—For that much maligned subject, Classification, I should like to say a word. We hear a great deal regarding the lack of systematic classification in public libraries, and especially so in the provinces—much as that is doubtful. Yet those who so bitterly lament this want of classification never seem to think that the present state of things could be remedied if only the proper means were tried. Surely a logical proposal would be the inauguration of a correspondence class in this subject by which light would be disseminated amongst the darker regions of the provinces. The 1906 Examination shows an increase of 500 per cent. on the previous year, but of this year's students less than one-half were provincial.

If a sufficient number of students were forthcoming, surely the Library Association Education Committee could have no objections to extending such a facility as is here suggested to the provinces, and I am certain if the opportunity were afforded many students would enrol.

Glasgow.

BIBLION.

R. G. W. (Bolton) sends us an interesting letter—suggested by our account of the L.A.A. Cricket Match last month—pointing out that in connection with the staff of the Bolton Public Libraries there is a flourishing cricket club, with a playing membership of eighteen. As the club was only formed during the season just ended, only six matches were played, three of which were won and three lost. Our correspondent thinks it would be interesting to know how many libraries can boast of cricket clubs in connection with their staffs, and thinks the number would be small.

MARRIAGE OF MR. H. TAPLEY SOPER.

At the Parish Church, Stoke Newington, on the 10th September, the marriage was solemnised of Mr. H. Tapley Soper, F.R.Hist.S., Librarian of Exeter, and Miss Jessie Brooks, of Stoke Newington. Mr. W. J. Harris, Librarian of Bromley, Kent, officiated as best man, and the profession was further represented by Messrs. Preece and Harper (Stoke Newington) and Chambers (Plumstead). After the ceremony a reception was held at the bride's residence, and later Mr. and Mrs. Soper left for Bournemouth, where the honeymoon will be spent. Mr. Soper, who is an Hon. Member of the Library Assistants' Association, will be best remembered as a former editor of "The Library Assistant," and we are sure that our readers will join with us in wishing him and his bride a happy and prosperous future.

LIBRARY ASSOCIATION CLASSES.

Attention is directed to the following extract from the Calendar of the London School of Economics, showing the arrangements made for classes in Librarianship and cognate subjects for the Session 1906-7:—

Library Economy: a course of twenty lectures by Mr. J. D. Brown, on Wednesdays at 3.15 p.m., in Michaelmas and Lent Terms, beginning M.T. 10th October; L.T. 23rd January. Fee for the course, £1 1s.; Terminal fee 12s. 6d. The lectures and demonstrations will be illustrated by means of specimens of apparatus, models, forms, etc., and home and class exercises will be given to students during the progress of the course.

Historic Bibliography: a course of ten lectures by Mr. Alfred W. Pollard, M.A., on Wednesdays, at 4.45 p.m., in Michaelmas Term, beginning 10th October. Terminal fee, 12s. 6d.

A course of ten lectures on **Practical Bibliography** will be arranged for the Lent Term.

Another class of interest to assistants is that in **Elementary Palaeography and Diplomatic** (Latin, French and English), 7th to 18th Centuries: a course of thirty lectures by Mr. H. Hall, F.A.I., of H.M. Public Record Office, on Fridays, at 6 p.m., beginning M.T. 5th October; L.T. 18th January; S.T. 3rd May. In connection with this course Mr. Hall will hold a class for practical instruction by means of reading fac-similes and inspecting original MSS. on Fridays at 7 p.m. Fee, Sessional £2 12s. 6d.; Terminal £1 1s. Fee for lectures or class, Sessional £1 11s. 6d.; Terminal, 12s. 6d.

Intending students are requested to apply either personally or by post at least two clear days before the first meeting of the class they desire to attend. All fees must be paid at the time when application to join is made.

NEW MEMBERS.

Senior: Messrs. J. Perry (Leyton) and J. D. Ross (York).

Junior: Messrs. H. W. Hull, P. Lundie and A. W. Ruffy (all of Fulham).

APPOINTMENT.

ALDRED, Mr. T., Southwark, to be Borough Librarian, Hackney.

ADDRESSES.

Chairman—Mr. W. Benson Thorne, Bromley Library, Poplar, E.

Hon. Treasurer—Mr. W. Geo. Chambers, Public Library, Plumstead (Telephone—45 Woolwich).

Hon. Secretary—Mr. W. C. Berwick Sayers, Central Library, Croydon (Telephone—394 Croydon).

Hon. Editor—Mr. Hugh Smith, Bishopsgate Institute, E.C., to whom matter for the November number should be sent not later than October 20th.